

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 5-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended and claims 12-19 are added. Reconsideration of the present application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication in the Office Action Summary that claims 5-11 are allowed and for the indication that claims 2 and 3 contain allowable subject matter. Claims 2 and 3 have been rewritten in independent form as claims 18 and 19, respectively.

The Office Action rejects claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,684,627 to Mizuno. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Mizuno fails to disclose a method of purifying exhaust gas of an internal combustion engine comprising, a sulfur-solidifying agent is supplied to the engine to solidify the SO_x in the exhaust gas thereby to prevent the SO_x in the exhaust gas from being occluded by the NO_x occluding and reducing catalyst, and the amount of supplying said sulfur-solidifying agent to the engine is controlled depending upon the condition of the atmosphere at said catalyst as detected by a sensor, as claimed in claim 1.

Mizuno merely discloses adding sulfur-solidifier in the intake path, in the combustion chamber, or in the exhaust path to solidify the sulfur component in the fuel (col. 2, lines 37-48); and that the sulfur component, as a source of SO_x poisoning, is solidified to reduce the SO_x content in the exhaust gas, thereby decreasing the quantity of SO_x occluded in the NO_x-occluding reduction-type exhaust purifying catalyst 39 (col. 8, lines 38-46).

There is no disclosure in Mizuno of detecting the condition of the atmosphere at the catalyst by a sensor.

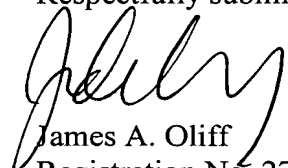
For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that Mizuno fails to disclose all of the features of claim 1. As such, claim 1, as well as those claims which depend from

claim 1, are distinguishable over the applied art. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,


James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Jude L. Cooney
Registration No. 54,045

JAO:JLC/aaw

Date: May 19, 2005

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
--